



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Contact: John Lundberg (360) 586-8459

Mike Louisell (360) 902-1813

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

Vader open house slated Jan. 29 to discuss European gypsy moth spraying

OLYMPIA – A plan to eradicate European gypsy moths from Vader is the subject of an open house the state Department of Agriculture has scheduled from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Jan. 29 in the Vader Elementary School cafeteria. Spraying of a 560-acre site is proposed to eradicate a population of gypsy moths that continues to reproduce in that area.

Vader residents are invited to drop in anytime during the two-hour period to review material and ask questions. Representatives from the Department of Agriculture's gypsy moth team will be on hand to provide information on the infestation and proposed treatment.

Seventy-six moths were caught in Vader in the summer of 2000, prompting three applications of the biological insecticide Foray 48B containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (Btk). The insecticide was sprayed on a 29-acre site last May using trucks and spray equipment similar to that used by lawn and tree care companies.

Last summer, 10 more gypsy moths were caught in Vader, indicating that the population had been reduced but not eradicated.

"The record of achieving eradication after treatment in one year is very good," said Chad Phillips, Department of Agriculture project coordinator. "But there have been instances where a second-year treatment is necessary."

Boundaries of the proposed 560-acre treatment this spring are 1) in the north, an east-west line about 1/4 mile south of Awmiller Road, 2) in the east, E Street, 3) in the south, 10th Street, and 4) in the west, a north-south line about 300 feet west of Maschke Road.

Eradication efforts this year would again consist of three treatments of an insecticide applied seven to 14 days apart, beginning in late April or early May.

The gypsy moth is one of America's worst forest pest insects. It feeds on the foliage of more than 500 different species of trees and shrubs and causes millions of dollars of economic and environmental damage. State

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agriculture officials believe that if the gypsy moth were to become permanently established in the Evergreen State, it would have a devastating impact on the state's agriculture, nursery, and timber industries.

The insecticide the Department of Agriculture is proposing to use is the same one used last year -- Foray 48B. It has been registered for use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and has a proven safety record with people, pets, livestock, birds, fish, and other insects such as bees. *Btk* has been evaluated in a final environmental impact statement, which includes human health and ecological risk assessments.

Found naturally in the soil, *Btk* is toxic only to moths and butterflies in the caterpillar stage when the insecticide is applied. It is commonly used by organic gardeners today, and it has been used on gypsy moth control projects since the early 1980s.

The insecticide will be applied by either helicopters and/or ground equipment. Since the state began gypsy moth insecticide treatments in the 1970s, a total of 71 treatments have been made. Fifty-four of the treatments have been by ground and 17 by air, depending on the size of the treatment area and access to the trees and shrubs.

Between the time a proposal is made and the treatment actually begins, the Department of Agriculture complies with applicable state and federal environmental laws. Two environmental documents are prepared and made available for 30-day public review and comment periods. One document is an environmental checklist, and the other is a draft environmental assessment.

The environmental checklist should be ready for public review by late January or early February, and the draft environmental assessment by late February or early March. The documents will be available for review on the Department of Agriculture's Web site at www.wa.gov/agr/gypsy.htm and at selected libraries around the state.

Call the Department of Agriculture's toll-free Pest Program Hotline at (800) 443-6684 for dates when the documents will be posted to the Web site and made available at selected libraries.

Any comments submitted will be carefully reviewed by state agriculture officials before a decision to proceed with the treatment is made.

For more information call (800) 443-67684; send e-mail to PestProgram@agr.wa.gov; or visit the agency's Web site.

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